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ABSTRACT

Faced with increasing concerns of educators, parents, and students regarding the lack of school discipline, this study evaluated a social skills program to reduce inappropriate behavioral incidents in urban middle and rural high school students. Students' inappropriate behavior, such as talking back, not preparing for class or not participating in class, or making inappropriate physical contact, was documented through teacher observations, office discipline referrals, and student surveys. The intervention components were: (1) cooperative learning activities; (2) a community/school service project incorporating cooperative skills; and (3) a conflict resolution program. Students were assigned to culturally diverse, mixed-ability groups of three to five students for cooperative learning activities. Classroom teachers instructed the cooperative learning groups in establishing eye contact, sharing materials, using appropriate manners, using communication and cooperative team skills, listening attentively, and making appropriate responses. Formal instruction took place once to three times per week through individual, small-group, or whole-class instruction. Teaching techniques included T-charts, modeling, role play, cause and effect charts, and problem-solving activities. A variety of community and school service projects such as recycling, grounds keeping, and canned food drives were carried out in groups of two to five students. Conflict resolution skills were taught for four to five periods each week. Data were collected through observation checklists, teacher journals, office referrals, and student surveys. Post-intervention data indicated a marked improvement in interpersonal behaviors, an increase in appropriate social skills, and fewer discipline problems in the classroom. (Appended are data forms and classroom materials. Contains 44 references.) (KB)

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IMPROVING DISCIPLINE THROUGH THE USE OF SOCIAL SKILLS

Danielle Cook
Lynn Rudin

An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the

School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

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ABSTRACT

This report describes a program to reduce inappropriate behavioral incidents. The targeted population consists of middle school students in an urban area and high school students in a rural area in the midwest. The problem of inappropriate behaviors will be documented through data collected from teacher observations, office discipline referrals, and student surveys.

Analysis of site information suggests that issues related to inadequate facilities, understaffing, and parental involvement to be possible probable causes. Further analysis of the middle school site revealed demographic changes such as population shifts, single parent families, and low socio-economic status may also contribute. Review of literature suggests negative peer influences, poor classroom social climates, inadequate character education, and lack of student acceptance of responsibility as additional possible causes.

A review of solution strategies suggested by literature combined with an analysis of the problem setting resulted in the selection of a cooperative learning intervention, a community school service project, and a conflict resolution program.

Postintervention data indicated a marked improvement in interpersonal behaviors, an increase in appropriate social skills, and fewer discipline problems in the classroom.

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

The targeted students for this study were identified as having inappropriate interpersonal behaviors that result in discipline problems in the classroom. Evidence for the existence of these problems were determined by examining teacher anecdotal records, teacher observational checklists and discipline office referrals.

Immediate Problem Context

This action research is taking place in two different target schools which serve two different communities.

School Site A:

The targeted middle school consists of grades five through eight, and is located in the southeastern part of a large urban area in the midwest. The brick school building consists of three floors and a basement. Two additions have been built since the original construction in 1902. In 1961, four classrooms, a kitchen, and a small gymnasium with locker rooms and restrooms were added. In 1993 three additional classrooms and an all-purpose room that is primarily used as a cafeteria, were added. The building is flanked by a parking lot of one of the community's hospitals. The area in front and one side of the building's grounds are blacktopped and fenced. The remaining side has a small grassy area where the school sign is located. This area has limited access for the students, without supervision. The building is in fair physical condition and all of the classrooms are presently being utilized. The library and gymnasium, however, are inadequate for the number of students required to use these facilities.

According to school records, the school contains 16 regular division classrooms, 3 of which are inclusion classrooms, 2 self-contained special education classrooms, a library, a science lab, a computer lab and a gymnasium. The faculty consists of five special education teachers, 18 full-time and 1 part-time regular division teachers. In addition to the classroom teachers, there are two physical education teachers, a part-time speech teacher, part-time band, orchestra, and chorus instructors, and a part-time English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher. Other staff members include a part-time community aid, a part-time student advisory counselor, a librarian, a full time security officer, two custodians, one full-time secretary and a part-time secretary. The administrative staff consists of a principal and a part-time administrative assistant who begins his day at 11:00 a.m. The racial/ethnic composition of the staff is 73% Caucasian, and 27% African-American. Seventy percent of the staff are female and 30% are male. The average number of years teaching is 13 and ranges from 2 to 27 years. Fifty percent of the staff have a Masters Degree or better, and 13% are currently working towards their Masters Degree.

The population of the targeted school is 418 according to the 1995 School Report Card. Thirty-one percent of the student population is Caucasian, 66% African-American, 1% Hispanic and 2% Asian/Pacific Islander. The population is almost equally divided between boys and girls. Approximately 16% of the students pay to ride the bus with the remaining students walking or using other transportation.

The student mobility rate is 43% which is higher than the district average of 31%. The student attendance rate is 90.2% compared to that of the district of 92.1%. The chronic truancy rate is 2.2% compared to 4.9% for the school district. The school qualifies as a Chapter 1 school with 80% of the students receiving free or reduced lunch. Almost 63% of the students in the targeted middle school come from single parent/guardian homes with the head of the household being a female.

School records indicate that almost 30% percent of the students have been retained at least one time during their school careers. There were 278 suspension and 4 expulsions administered during the past school year. Approximately 1500 Improvement Periods (a 3-day

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detention for 1 hour each day) were issued as well as approximately 10 Thursday/Friday In-school Suspensions (ISS) and 10 Saturday In-school Suspensions (SIS) per week. More than 5% of the students take daily medication for Attention Deficit Disorder-Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADD-ADHD) problems.

The school is fully departmentalized for most of the students, with the exception of the special education students in self-contained classrooms. Each grade level consists of a team, of four regular division teachers and at least one special education teacher. Physical education and music teachers are shared with all grade level teams. The school day consists of eight-45 minute periods. Grades are reported to parents every nine weeks with mid-term notices sent after the first four weeks of each grading period.

The targeted school has implemented several programs to improve student behavior and enhance academic progress. A behavior incentive program is provided once every grading period for those students who have not received a School Improvement Period (detention), an ISS, a SIS or an out of school suspension. Events for this program include dances, food-fests and special sporting events involving student/staff competitions. Other academic programs include tutoring both after school and Saturday mornings, Math Counts Club, Accelerated Reader programs, and a computer club. Academic incentives include an Honor Roll and a program that encourages students to improve their grades from the previous grading period called BUG (Bring Up Grades).

The targeted middle school is part of a middle sized, urban school district which services 16,141 students. It includes four high schools and an alternative high school, 12 middle schools (grades 5-8), 15 primary schools, a K-8 magnet school, a 3-8 gifted school, an adult education center, a diagnostic learning center and a school for severely handicapped students. The district also includes several special schools for students not able to be serviced in the regular school setting, including an extended day program. Within two of the high schools are separate academies which guide students into either health or business professions.

The total number of teachers in the district is presently 1,032 of which 23.7% are male and 76.3% are female. The racial/ethnic background of these teachers are 92.3% Caucasian, 7.0% African-American, 0.4% Hispanic and 0.4% Asian/Pacific Islander. Approximately 46% of the teachers have a Master's Degree or above and 54% have Bachelor's Degrees. The average years teaching experience is 13.8 years. The pupil-teacher ratio is 19.7:1 at the elementary level and 18.1:1 at the high school level. The average teacher salary for the district is $34,361 and the average administrators salary is $58,100. The operating expense per pupil is $5,556 and the district's total expenditures was $93,008,880 for the school year.

The racial/ethnic make up of the students in the district is 48.4% Caucasian, 48% African-American, 18% Hispanic, 17% Asian/Pacific Islander and .1% Native American. Approximately 53.3% of the students are considered low income and the high school graduation rate is 74.3%. (District Report Card, 1995)

Community Site A:

The surrounding neighborhood consists of older homes of which 47% are rented. The median income of the families in the neighborhood is approximately $21,191 per year. Almost 25% of the families with children less than 18 years of age are living below poverty level in this area. Those families with a female head of the household with children under the age of 18 have almost a 50% poverty rate. The neighborhood work force consists of approximately 20% white collar workers and 80% blue collar workers. Eleven percent of the civilian work force is unemployed.

The educational levels of the members of the surrounding neighborhood that are 25 years of age or older are 7% with less than a ninth grade education, 18% have some high school education but did not graduate, 32% have a high school diploma, 24% have some college education, 6% have an Associates Degree, 9% have a Bachelor's degree and 4% have a graduate or professional degree.

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The racial/ethnic origin of the surrounding neighborhood is approximately 75% Caucasian, 23% African-American, and the remaining 2% is Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander or Native American. (City of Peoria Statistical Abstract, 1993)

The targeted school is located in a mid-sized, midwestern city with the population of 113,983 and covers 620 square miles. In the past decade, the population has decreased 8.2%. Approximately 77% of the city's population is Caucasian, 21% African-American and the remaining 2% are Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander or Native American. There are approximately 44,976 households of which 30.8% have their own children under the age of 18 living with them. The average income is $34,988 with 18.9% of the population living below the poverty level. Of the estimated 4,284 families living below the poverty level, 2077 have public assistance income. (Census, 1990)

The city is surrounded by a major river on one side and productive farmland on the other three sides. The northern and western edges of the city have seen a great deal of expansion despite a strike of nearly a year and a half by employees of a major manufacturing company that is the areas leading employer. The community also has three major hospitals, two of which are second and third largest employers. Other important employers in the city include the school district of which the targeted school is a part, an electric company, a marketing company, a private university and an employee owned newspaper. The city also contains a major mental health facility and a health education center. A private university and a medical school along with six other colleges are in easy proximity to this community.

The community includes 8362 acres of parks, a museum, 15 golf courses and many recreational establishments that provide athletic opportunities, both amateur and professional. Transportation opportunities include twelve highways, in and around the city, three bus lines, eight railroads and an airport, all available within minutes of the city. The city is the second largest metro market within the state. (Anderson, 1994)

School Site B

The targeted high school is located in a medium size village in the midwest. The school building was constructed in 1954 and consists of three floors and a basement level. According to school records, improvements and additions were made in 1957, 1965, 1971, 1976, and 1996. The building is a total of 173, 922 square feet and sits on approximately seven acres of land. The grounds house a softball field, a baseball field, a football field, an all-weather track, and a practice field area. The building is made up of 48 classrooms, 2 gyms, a band room, a chorus room, a cafeteria, a wrestling room, a weight room, a library, a computer lab, a broadcasting studio, a performing arts center, and 2 administrative office complexes.

Students attend the targeted school from 9th grade to 12th grade. The school day consists of seven periods of 50 minutes in length. Grade reports are issued every nine weeks. The school contains 10 departments which are made up of the following: 4 business education teachers, 13 language teachers, 3 home economics teachers, 4 music/art teachers, 7 math teachers, 4 industrial technology teachers, 8 science teachers, 10 driver's education/health/physical education teachers, 6 social studies teachers, and 6 special education teachers. The faculty consists of 65 teachers, 7 assistants, 4 administrators, 2 deans, 3 counselors, 2 social workers, 1 speech pathologist, 1 activities director, 2 librarians, 1 behavior disorder specialist, 6 secretarial positions, and 6 custodian staff. School records indicate that the racial/ethnic composition of the staff is 100% Caucasian. Thirty-three percent of the staff are male and 67% are female. The average number of years taught is 21 years and ranges from 1 to 37 years. Forty percent of the faculty have a Master's Degree and 90% have taken advanced hours.

The population of the targeted school is 977. Ninety-nine percent of the student population is Caucasian, with the remaining one percent made up of African Americans and Asian Pacific Islanders. The gender make-up of the population consists of 51% female and 49% male. Ninety-four percent of the students are regular division and 6% are special education. There are 50 students that are fully included in regular division and 4 students in self-contained

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classrooms. The average class size is 22.2 with the exception of physical education classes. Three percent of the student body qualify for reduced priced or free lunch.

The student mobility rate is 7.4% which is quite lower than the state average of 19.3%. The student attendance rate is 93.9% and chronic truancy rate is 1.9% according to the School Report Card. School record indicate that during the 1995-96 school year of August through February there were 13 suspensions and 1 expulsion. During that same time, 220 referrals were issued to 101 different students.

The targeted school has implemented several programs to assist the students both academically and behaviorally. A tutor program and after hours homework hall is provided by teachers and students. A Peer Helpers Program and Circle of Friends Program have been developed to build student's self-esteem, coping skills, and tolerance levels. The school offers over 15 different clubs and 13 athletic activities. Eighty percent of the student population is involved with at least one extra-curricular activity. The implementation of the Alternative Resource Center provides one on one instruction and guidance for behaviorally challenged students.

The students of the targeted school are very academically conscientious. The school offers 125 courses in college preparatory, vocational education, and or special education programs. The students' academic achievements are far exceeding the state goals. Of the 226 sophomores tested on the Illinois Goal Assessment Program, 51% exceeded goals in reading, 47% exceeded in math, and 51% exceeded goals in writing. Of the 237 juniors tested, 41% exceeded goals in science and 45% exceeded goals in social studies. The average American College Testing score was 21.2. Seventy-five percent of graduates continue their education in either a four year university, two year community college, or apprentice program.

The targeted high school is part of a medium size school district which serves 2,836 students living in a 50 square mile radius. The racial ethnic make-up of the students in the district is 98.6% Caucasian, 1% African American, 1% Hispanic, and 1.1% Asian Pacific Islander. The district is made up of one high school (grades 9-12), one junior high (grades 7-8),

and four grade schools (grades K-6).

The total number of teachers is 171 with 26.8% male and 73.2% female. The racial ethnic background of teachers is 99.4% Caucasian and .6% African American. Thirty-five percent of the teachers have a Master's Degree and above, and 65% have a Bachelor's Degree. The average years teaching experience is 14.4. The pupil-teacher ratio is one teacher per every 17.2 students. The average teachers salary is $35,247 and the average administrators salary is $59,801. The operating expense per pupil is $5, 033 and the total district expenditures are $14,226,468 according to the 1995 School Report Card.

School records state that the targeted district administrative positions consist of one school board made up of seven members, one superintendent, one assistant superintendent, six principals, and one chief of transportation. Fifty-one percent of the district students are bussed daily to school.

Community Site B:

The targeted school is located in a very conservative village which is surrounded by productive farmland in the midwest. The population of 13,799 has been steadily growing the past 10 years. Parents or guardians are actively involved in the school process and stress the importance of education. There are only nine 16-19 year olds not enrolled in school and not high school graduates. Ninety percent of parents guardians contacted a teacher at least once in the last year. Parent guardian organizations are involved with textbook selections, discipline policies, and extra-curricular activities. The targeted community has 26 churches which reflects the strong influence of religious mores of its' residents. The racial ethnic make-up of the community is 99% Caucasian and the other 1% is African American, Asian Pacific Islander and Hispanic.

Ninety percent of family households are married, two parent households. Seventy-four percent are owner occupied and there is only a .9% homeowner vacancy rate. The median dollar value of homes in the community is $78,800. The median household income is $39,788, median family income $45,813, and non-family household income is $18,500.

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The community work force of those employed consists of 40% white collar and 60% blue collar workers. There is an unemployment rate of only 1.7% according to the 1990 Census.

The village has six major employers: One heavy machinery manufacturer, one canning manufacturer, one metal production factory, one building construction company, and two large trucking companies. The village has seen constant growth in home construction as well as business economical growth.

The village provides small town living with big town advantages. Retail stores, fast food restaurants, fine dining, a movie theater, two small shopping plazas, a developed downtown, three hotels, three car dealerships, and three park recreational facilities provide many conveniences. The community is centrally located approximately 20 minutes between two major cities. An interstate which connects all three, provides easy access to three major hospitals, three universities, and two junior colleges.

Regional and National Context of Problem

Teachers, administrators, parents and students, alike, acknowledge that discipline is a major concern in our nation's schools. Both students and teachers feel unsafe and insecure due to the increasingly violent, disruptive behaviors of students. According to Deborah Wadsworth, executive director of Public Agenda, a nonprofit public opinion research organization, (as cited in American Teacher Dec. 94 Jan. 95), almost 9 of 10 Americans "believe that dependability and discipline make a great deal of difference in how students learn". Twenty years ago, in 1975, unruly students were described as behind in their work, making disruptive noises, not listening to directions, never on time, picking on each other and talking back to the teacher. In 1995 unruly students were described as not doing their work, throwing objects at each other, unable to listen because of drugs and alcohol, skipping school, bringing weapons to school and more likely to physically harm the teacher. (Learning, 1995)

"Lack of discipline" was judged the biggest problem faced by local public schools, in 18 of 26 prior Phi Delta Kappan Gallup Polls. Fifteen percent of those who responded, mentioned discipline and of lack of student control, as major problems in public schools. Nine percent

listed "fighting violence gangs" and 3% listed "lack of respect" as major problems. The public also overwhelmingly believes that violence in the public schools is not only increasing at the national school level (89%) but 67% believes it's increasing in local schools. According to the National Association of Secondary School Principals (as cited by Phi Delta Kappan, 1995) "three million crimes occur in or near school property each year. Such violence deprives students of their rights to quality education." According to Furlong, Morrison and Dear (as cited in Gable, Bullock and Harader, 1995), some reports indicate that one in every 10 students fall victim to some act of aggression. The majority of the aggressive acts consist of bullying, verbal/physical threats, shoving, fist fights and other simple assaults, though more violent attacks on teachers and students grab media attention.

In 1994, the Phi Delta Kappan/Gallup Poll showed that a vast majority of the public believed that, together, both poor discipline and violence were the most serious problems in their local schools for the first time ever. In 1995, twenty-four percent felt that the major cause of student violence in public school is a "lack of parent control, discipline, supervision, involvement and values". Another 6% felt that pupil's attitudes, boredom, disrespect and lack of self-esteem were the major causes of student violence.

Few students perceive that their peers feel it is important to behave in class. According to 1993 National Household Education Survey (NHES), a survey of 6-12 graders that was sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics of the United States Department of Education (as cited in Zill and Nolin,1994), only 30% of U.S. students in grades 6-12, say that their friends at school feel it's important to behave properly in class. Forty percent thought that their friends felt it was very important to behave in school in elementary school. That percentage drops to 29% for middle or junior high and 27% for senior high. When racially broken down, 40% of the Asian students reported peer approval of good behavior, followed by 34% of the Hispanic students. Slightly more African American students, 31%, than Caucasian students, 29%, feel that their friends felt it was very important to behave in class. Thirty-two percent of private school students compared to 29% of public school students report peer

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approval of good behavior. More than a third of the students thought that an atmosphere of mutual respect did not exist between students and teachers at their schools.

Students also reported that bullying behaviors from other students was a major source of concern for them. About 70% of students knew of harm or harassment at school and about 50% had witnessed at least one type of incident. Twenty-five percent reported that they worried about being bullied, attacked, or robbed and 12%, or 1 out of 8 students reported that they had been personally and directly victimized at school. Students in public school were more likely to know about harm or harassment going on at school, more likely to witness incidents of harassment, more likely to fear becoming victims themselves, and more likely to have been victimized at school.

Parent participation in school activities seems to be another factor that affects student behavior. Parent participation is likely to mean closer parental monitoring of school activities, particularly their child's classroom. The study showed that students whose parents had low school involvement were three times as likely to have been suspended or expelled from school compared to students with highly involved parents. (Zill and Nolin, 1994)

Teachers were more likely to view student misbehaviors in class, as interfering with their teaching than parents are to view it as interfering with their children's ability to learn. Similarly, more teachers report that disruptive student behaviors were a problem for the learning environment than parents. (Anderson,1994)

Teachers do not believe they have much influence over determining the discipline policy of their schools. Only 31% of public school teachers and 54% of private school teachers believe that they have an influence over determining the discipline policy of their schools. A greater percentage of private school teachers, 84%, than public school teachers, 72%, feel they have considerable influence over the disciplining students in their classrooms. (Anderson, 1994)

Overall, these are alarming statistics that the teachers, administrators, parents, and students face everyday in schools throughout the nation.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

The problem was identified as students having inappropriate interpersonal behaviors that result in discipline problems in the classroom. The tools created to assess the problem include: student surveys, teacher journals, office referrals, observational checklists, and student feedback.

The results of the student survey at Site A (Appendix A), developed by the researchers and used at both of the research sites, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Categories and Numbers of Inappropriate Behaviors Observed By Students At Site A

	Talk Outs	Put Downs	Not Following Directions	Talking Back	Not Paying Atten	Out of Seat	Not Prepared For Class	Not Participating In Class	Inapprop Physical Contact	Other Behaviors
Students Who Observed Behaviors	30	30	30	28	30	27	22	19	19	24
Behaviors Interferring In Learning	22	15	11	15	9	2	5	5	5	18

The survey was completed by 30 of 35 students. The most frequently observed inappropriate behaviors reported by the students were talking out (30), putdowns (30), not following directions (30), and not paying attention (30). Of the top six observed inappropriate

behaviors, four are considered socially oriented. Socially oriented behaviors refers to student-to-student, as opposed to student-to-teacher or student-to-task. These include: talking out, put-downs, not paying attention, and out of seat. Other inappropriate behaviors observed by the students included playing in desks, using profanity towards teachers, and skipping / unexcused absents from school. The researchers found it interesting that 8 of 21 responses sited skipping / unexcused absents as being inappropriate behavior.

Students were also asked to name the three behaviors that interfere in their learning the most. Responses indicated that the top five inappropriate behaviors observed in the class were also those that they felt interfered in their learning the most.

At site B, 15 of 19 students completed the survey. The results of the student survey are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Categories and Numbers of Inappropriate Behaviors Observed By Students At Site B

	Talk Outs	Put Downs	Not Following Directions	Talking Back	Not Paying Atten	Out of Seat	Not Prepared For Class	Not Participating In Class	Inapprop Physical Contact	Other Behaviors
Students Who Observed Behaviors	9	9	7	4	7	2	8	8	5	0
Behaviors Interferring In Learning	9	9	4	3	3	0	4	3	1	0

The data in Table 2 indicates the top two observed inappropriate behaviors are talking out and putdowns. These are the same top two behaviors which students indicated interfered with their learning the most. Both talking out and put downs are considered socially oriented by the researchers.

At both research sites the inappropriate behaviors of talking out and putdowns were among the leading categories. The information in figure 1 illustrates this. It is important to note

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that these were also among the leading inappropriate behaviors that students perceived as interfering in their learning. The teachers' journals at both of the research sites reflected that the students responded honestly and accurately as to the behaviors they had observed.

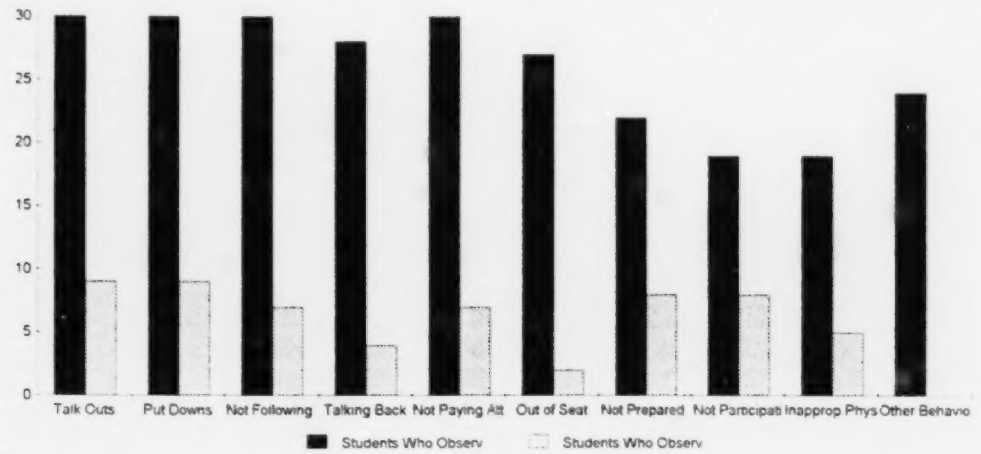

Figure 1. Categories of student observed behaviors and a comparison of site A and B.

The observation checklist (Appendix B) developed by the researchers, was used at both sites. The results of Site A are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Categories and Number of Researcher Observed Inappropriate Behaviors at Site A

Inappropriate Behaviors	Number of Behaviors Week 1	Number of Behaviors Week 2	Number of Students Week 1	Number of Students Week 2
Talk Outs	204	267	35	33
Put Downs	4	11	4	9
Missing Supplies	8	10	6	9
Phys. Contact	0	0	0	0
Off Task	101	86	30	18
Nonparticipation	9	1	6	1
Out of Seat	14	20	9	14
Other	3	1	2	1

As the data in Table 3 indicate, the number of inappropriate behaviors increased in all but three categories during the second week. The number of students committing these

behaviors varied from week one to week two. It should be noted that teacher journals indicate that the decrease in the number of students committing the behaviors reflects is, in part, due to the fact that two students were suspended during week two.

During week one 100% of the students talked out at some time during the observation period. This number decreased slightly to 90% in week two. The number of students observed committing off-task behaviors decreased almost 50% from week one to week two and non-participation among students decreased 84% the second week. Students committing out of seat behavior, putdowns, and missing supplies all increased at least 25%. The most significant increase came in the category of student talk outs and the most significant decrease came in the "not participating in class" category. This information is illustrated in figure 2.

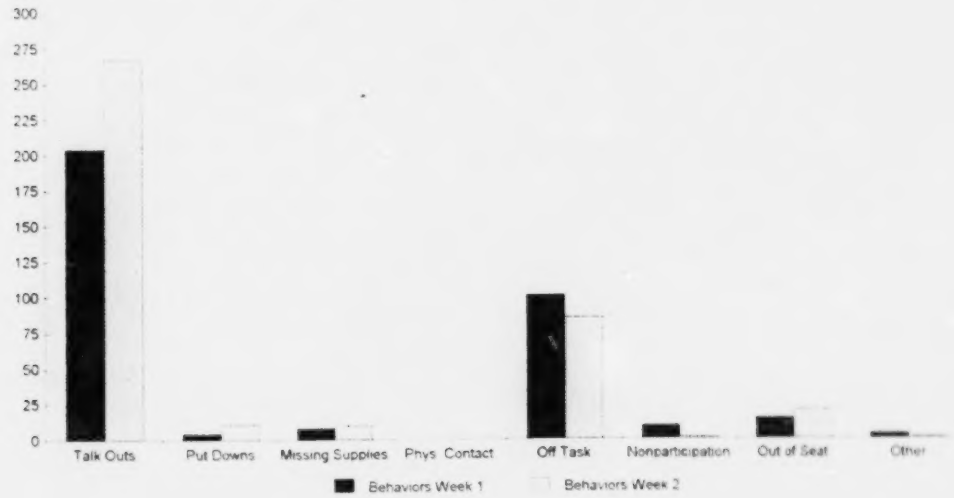

Figure 2. Categories of observed inappropriate behaviors by the researchers and a comparison of frequency of incidents at site A.

Table 4 indicates the frequency of inappropriate behaviors observed at site B. The data shows that of the top four inappropriate behaviors in week one, only missing supplies is not considered social by the researchers. Improvement in behaviors was shown in 50 percent of the categories from week one to week two. However, the category of off task behaviors increased by a factor of 6. This information is illustrated in figure 3.

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Table 4

Categories and Numbers of Researcher Observed Inappropriate Behaviors Site B

Inappropriate Behaviors	Number of Behaviors Week 1	Number of Behaviors Week 2	Number of Students Week 1	Number of Students Week 2
Talk Outs	8	8	6	5
Put Downs	12	10	4	4
Missing Supplies	11	5	3	10
Phys. Contact	2	1	1	1
Off Task	2	12	2	5
Nonparticipation	11	8	5	4
Out of Seat	3	3	2	4
Other	3	0	1	1

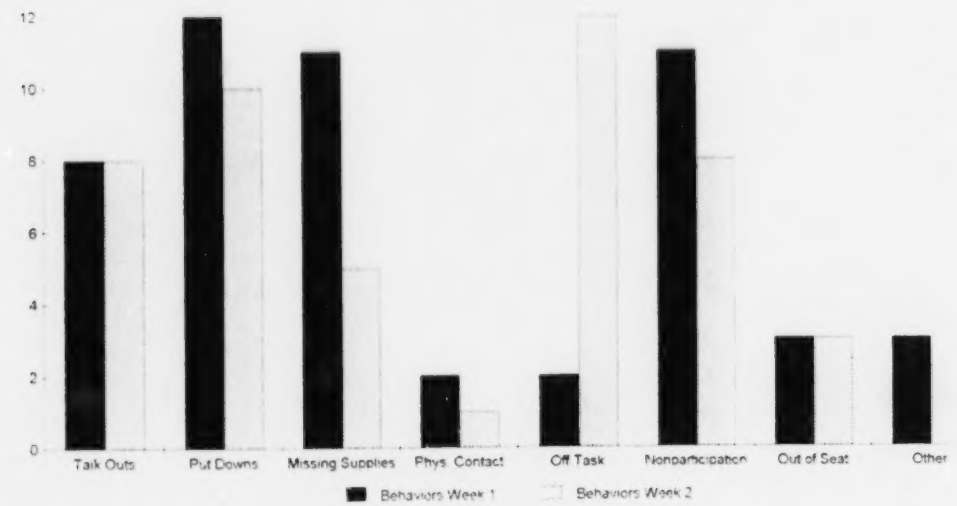

Figure 3. Categories of observed inappropriate behaviors and a comparison of frequency of incidents by week.

The previous data confirm the researchers thoughts that the students in each of the two research sites demonstrate behaviors that are inappropriate. The students' inappropriate interpersonal skills, either student-to-student or student to teacher, often result in discipline

problems and disruptions in the classroom. The inappropriate interpersonal behaviors were found at both of the research sites, in varying degrees. However, the students at site A exhibit the behaviors more frequently and to a greater degree of severity.

Probable Causes

The literature suggests several probable causes for inappropriate behaviors in the classroom. According to Coate, Orr, Soderberg, and the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, (as cited in Iannaccone, Wienke, and Cosden, 1992):

> Social skills deficits are viewed as critical factors in the widespread social problems of our youth. High rates of violent crime, racial and ethnic discrimination, gang wars, school dropouts, post high school unemployment and crime, teenage pregnancy, teenager suicide, drug and alcohol abuse and general social maladaption contribute to a nationwide emergency of unprecedented proportion. (p.111)

Threatening and assaultive behavior modeled and reinforced in and outside the home, can contribute to antisocial and aggressive behavior before children even begin school, according to Olweus and Patterson, (as cited in Gable, Bullock, and Harader, 1995). Substance abuse, victimization, marital discord, spousal abuse, exposure to violence in the mass media, depression and poverty are also contributing factors according to Gable, (as cited in Gable, Bullock, and Harader, 1995).

Poor health and loneliness are other underlying causes of increased behavior problems. Increasing loneliness affects children in all socio-economic groups (Peterson, 1993). According to Simons, Finley, and Yang (as cited in Bouas, 1993), today's youth spend less time with parents and other caring adults than teenagers of earlier generations. One in five students surveyed (grades 6-12) reported that within the previous month, they had not had a ten-minute conversation with at least one of their parents according to a report published in 1991 by The Children's Defense Fund. Conscience is impaired and values are not internalized in children when the social bond between the child and adult are not nurtured. These children are often labeled antisocial, sociopathic, or primitive-unsocialized (Brendtro and Long 1995).

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The family unit, disrupted by divorce, drugs, poverty, abuse, and other forces that interfere with normal parenting skills, breeds adults whose own lives are often chaotic and who cannot manage or monitor their children's affiliations or activities effectively. Parents often cannot spend as much time with their children, communicate behavioral expectations consistently, or teach conflict-resolution skills necessary in today's society according to Walker (as cited in Brentro and Long, 1995).

Another possible cause of inappropriate behavior in the classroom is the lack of parental involvement in schools. According to Wagner and Lord (1995), experts agree that children whose parents get involved in the school system do better. Parental involvement was found to be a significant predictor of student behavior and academic achievement in children of all incomes and races according to a 1994 study.

Wallis (1995) stated that inappropriate behavior and the loss of respect demonstrated daily in today's public schools, reveal a society in great trouble. Schools with poorly written and enforced behavior policies, establish vague educational missions that allow a disintegration of traditional and reasonable expectations of youth.

Teachers, who unintentionally use self-defeating discipline strategies, often perpetuate inappropriate behaviors. Unclear teacher expectations concerning appropriate behavior can be a major factor in causing inappropriate behavior in students. The overuse of punishment, or the use of ineffective, short-sighted, inconsistent punishments and negative teacher attitudes towards students are also factors that promote inappropriate behaviors in the classroom. (Wasicsko and Ross, 1994)

The lack of skills and strategies for self-control are yet another probable cause of inappropriate behavior in the classroom. According to Patterson (as cited in Anderson and Prawat, 1983), methods of self-control are not innate in all children and therefore must be taught to those who are unfamiliar with these strategies. When confronted with conflict, attempts to deny or ignore it can result in violence in schools. By teaching students to constructively manage adversity, school systems can utilize the positive aspects of conflict which include

motivation to learn, increased achievement, healthy social and cognitive development, and higher level reasoning and long term retention skills. Enriched relationships, increased ego strength, a clearer sense of self and the ability to change and compromise are also benefits that can be gained from learning to deal with conflict.

Even though these causal factors may have an impact on the problem at both of the research sites, some have more of an impact due to the number of students they affect. The factors that affect both of the research sites include:

- students' lack of social skills
- substance abuse
- marital discord and divorce in the home
- exposure to violence in the mass media
- student depression
- loneliness
- little or no daily parental contact
- poorly written and or enforced behavior policies in the school
- teachers who use self-defeating discipline strategies
- schools that do not have social skills development in their curriculum

Other factors, that may have an impact on some students at both of the research sites but primarily affect the students at site A include:

- victimization
- spousal abuse
- poverty
- a lack of parental involvement in the school
- a lack of skills and strategies for self-control
- a lack of skills in dealing with conflict.

Although all of the above mentioned factors contribute to inappropriate classroom behavior, it is obvious that those basic social skills necessary for positive interpersonal interactions are lacking

for many of our nations youth according to LeCroy (as cited in Iannaccone et al., 1992). While schools acknowledge the importance of good interpersonal skills, a positive, accurate view of self, and a strong value (character) base in their goals and philosophy statements, few address them specifically in their curriculum. According to The National Education Association, Education Policies Commission (as cited in Iannaccone et al, 1992):

> It appears that we have lost sight of some of the fundamental goals of our educational system, namely to foster the development of human relationships and to facilitate the acquisition of respect for other persons, develop students' insights into ethical values and principles, and strengthen their ability to live and work cooperatively with others. (p.111-112)

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

Literature indicates that there are many possible solutions to the growing number of discipline problems in schools due to inappropriate interpersonal behaviors. Among these possible solutions are: instruction in social and life skills, conflict resolution, cooperative learning, character education, and student respect and responsibility education. Research indicates that the development of a positive classroom climate may also aid in eliminating discipline problems in the classroom.

The lack of social skills is often viewed as a major factor in the growing number of social problems of our students. More than ever before, drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, suicide, school drop-outs, discrimination, gang violence, violent crimes, and general anti-social behaviors are contributing factors to the demise of the social climate of the country according to Gates, Orr, Soderberg, United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. According to the National Education Association and Education Policies Commission (as sited in Iannaccone, Wienke, and Cosden, 1992):

> To be successful socially and professionally, people need to complement their cognitive knowledge with good interpersonal skills, a strong value base (character), and a positive but accurate view of self. While schools usually subscribe to these characteristics in their goals and statements of philosophy, few address them substantially in the learning experiences they offer youth. (p 111)

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Teachers identify a variety of areas that benefit from social skills instruction. In a study conducted by Cosden, Iannaccone, and Wienke (1992), 48% of the teachers responding reported an improved school climate and integration of students. Other areas of improvement included contribution to teacher effectiveness (34%), student-peer relationships (38%), and teacher-student relationships (41%). Research indicates that implementation of a social skills curriculum could be beneficial in decreasing the number of inappropriate behaviors.

Today's classrooms are filled with conflict and coercion. Students often resort to disruptive behaviors as the only solution. Conflict resolution and peer mediation strategies are alternatives that teach students how to manage differences constructively. According to Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, and Burnett, (1992)

> Traditional discipline programs teach students that adults or authority figures are needed to resolve conflicts. The programs cost instructional and administrative time and work only as long as students are under surveillance. While adults may become more skillful in controlling students, students do not learn procedures, skills, and attitudes required to resolve conflicts constructively in their personal lives, at home, in school, at work, or in the community. (p.10)

By empowering children to be socially responsible and to resolve conflicts before they are allowed to escalate, students are taught to be tolerant of differences, and respect others' feelings and needs. Conflict resolution strategies such as mediation and group problem solving have been found to improve school climate and result in reduced violence, vandalism, chronic school absences, and suspensions (Bodine, Crawford, and Schrumpf, 1994). It is believed that the positive aspects of a conflict resolution program can go beyond minimizing student conflict and improving the school climate. Increased skills in the areas of leadership, problem-solving, and communication, along with improved self-esteem and academic achievement can be benefits of such a program. In addition, because the staff spends less time settling disputes among students, there is a decrease in the amount of tension due to constant discipline problems. Clabby & Elias (as cited in Cutrona and Guerin, 1994) found that students who do not learn skills related to

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conflict resolution when they are young, are likely to have problems in later life that quite often lead to illegal behaviors.

Cooperative learning is an instructional method in which students of all academic abilities work together in small groups toward a common goal. The success of each student is dependent on the collaboration of the group as a whole. The traditional classroom approach encourages competition among students, which often results in win / lose situations where one student wins at the expense of others (Slavin, 1987). Research indicates that cooperative learning has significant advantages over the traditional classroom setting in both the areas of intellectual and social development.

Currently, there are five schools of thought concerning cooperative learning programs though many teachers use different parts of each model in developing their cooperative learning classroom. The five models include: the conceptual approach, the curriculum approach, the structural approach, the group investigation approach, and the IRI synthesis approach.

The conceptual approach, created by Roger and David Johnson, emphasizes instruction of social skills with guided practice. Johnson and Johnson believe that for an activity to be cooperative learning, five crucial characteristics must be present, otherwise it is merely creative grouping. The five characteristics include: face-to-face interaction, individual accountability, cooperative social skills, positive interdependence and group processing. This method enhances the creative teacher's existing curriculum, but many teachers find it time consuming both in creating instructional materials and in time away from content areas (Bellanca and Fogarty, 1991).

The curriculum approach, created by Robert Slavin, consists of four curriculum packages addressing math and language arts. The curriculum packages: Team Accelerated Instruction (TAI), Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC), Teams, Games, Tournaments (TGT) and Student Teams, Achievement Division (STAD) each include cooperative learning components within the material. These programs are daily, pre-set lessons and strategies that take little preparation and offer instructional variety. However, there is no direct teaching of

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social skills, the program discourages transfer, and there are a limited number of curriculum packages available (Bellanca and Fogarty, 1991).

Kagan's structural approach is based on creation, analysis, and application of content-free structures. These structures are methods in which a teacher designs a task for the student to complete. The structures include: Match-ups, with student-to-student interactions, Jigsaw, where each student in a group studies part of the information and then teaches the other members, and In-Turn, where individual students take turns in a specific order. This method of cooperative learning is simple and easy to use, adds variety to daily assignments, and lends itself to problem solving and the application of thinking tasks. Disadvantages of using this method include an assumption that students will transfer cooperative skills and behaviors from other activities therefore, formal social skills instruction is not included and many teachers restrict its use to low-level classroom tasks such as spelling (Bellanca and Fogarty, 1991).

In the group investigation approach created by Sharon and Sharon, students work together to create a plan to investigate and find answers to questions about a broad topic. Each student decides on a subtopic, investigates for information, analyzes, and draw conclusions. The group then takes this information and creates a formal report which they present to the class. After the presentation, students self-evaluate their work. This model is very structured and presents a step-by-step procedure. It encourages communication skills, cooperative social-skill development, student-to-student interaction, creative problem solving, and encourages inquiry. However, if students have not been instructed in the areas of asking questions, positive interactions, handling open-ended tasks, solving problems or coming to a consensus within a group, this model will not be successful (Bellanca and Fogarty, 1991).

A fifth model, IRI synthesis, is a combination of the four models of cooperative learning with an emphasis on critical and creative thinking. Along with Johnson and Johnson's five components of cooperative learning, IRI includes an additional element of thinking for transfer. This approach facilitates transferring knowledge and skills across all curricular areas and into real life. This model, however, takes a great deal of time in an already overcrowded curriculum.

The ability to apply and process information is more important than students memorizing great quantities of information. IRI synthesis requires intense and supportive staff development and is difficult to test with standardized tests because it elicits intelligent behavior not necessarily test results.

Cooperative learning has important implications in developing peer relations, leadership and group skills, mutual respect and tolerance, higher levels of self-esteem and better understanding. Research shows that without opportunities to develop these skills, students can become caught in a self-defeating cycle as they try to satisfy their own needs for recognition, acceptance and belonging. Students can then often become disruptive, be labeled as behavior problems, withdraw, or even give up. The cooperative learning environment provides opportunities to satisfy students' needs (Hill and Hill, 1990).

Over 100 research studies have documented the success of cooperative learning (Tyrrell, 1990). Slavin, Leavey, and Madden (1984) found that students who worked cooperatively, demonstrated more positive behaviors and attitudes than those students in control groups. There is a positive correlation between cooperative attitudes and intrinsic motivation, self-esteem, helpful attitudes toward peers, pleasant regard for school personnel, and the open expression of feelings and ideas according to Owens and Barnes, (as cited in Hauserman, 1992). In a study, over a five year period, by Soloman, Watson, Schaps, Baltistich and Soloman, 1990 (as cited in Stevens and Salvin, 1995) it was found that students not only improved social problem-solving and prosocial behavior skills but also their adherence to democratic values.

Good character has been defined as knowing, desiring, and doing the good (Lickona, 1991). The widespread increase in crime, lack of self-control, and the deteriorating morals and values of today's youth, have heightened the need for character education. Disturbing statistics, such as over a twenty year period (1968-1988) violent crime increased fifty-three percent for the age group of seventeen or under, is evidence that our society is changing (Lickona, 1991). Theodore Roosevelt stated, "to educate a person in mind and not in morals, is to educate a menace to society" (Lickona, 1991, p.3).

Traditionally, family, church, and schools have been the primary teachers of character education. The increase of one parent families and the decrease of church attendance has resulted in the decline of family and religious influence. Historically, the formation of character has been the goal of education (Hieronymi & Kalish, 1994). Ethically, schools must contribute to the moral health and character of the young (Lickona, 1991).

There are conflicting views about character education in schools. There are those who believe that parents and the church should be the character educators of our youth. Research shows that some don't trust the educational system to teach their values (Barth, 1994). Another criticism is the overcrowded, mandated curriculum, which does not allow time to address character education.

There is growing support for schools to teach character education. Schools have been identified as the most important extra-familial environment to promote character education. Existing programs include the American Institute of Character Education in San Antonio, Texas which offers materials for K-6 that illustrate kindness, generosity, and honesty through discussion of stories (Leming, 1993). The Child Development Project in San Ramon, California, implements cooperative learning, literature to develop empathy, moral reasoning, and self discipline as its basis for teaching character (Lickona, 1991). Jefferson Center for Character Education teaches honesty, perseverance, tolerance, and respect in its program (Leming, 1993). Several schools around the country are also requiring students to complete community service and participate in citizenship training in order to gain an understanding and respect for the law.

Research shows that over the long term, problem behaviors can be reduced (Leming, 1993). The Child Development project showed significant improvement in the areas of classroom behavior, playground behavior, social problem-solving skills, and commitment to democratic values (Lickona, 1991). In the area of high-pressure academic accountability, it is important to note that these gains have been achieved without any sacrifice in academic achievement (Lickona, 1991).

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William Kilpatrick said, "The core problem facing our schools is a moral one. All the other problems derive from it. Even academic reform depends on putting character first" (Lickona, 1991, p.3). Schools should expose students to understanding, internalizing, and acting upon character values (Lickona, 1991). Parents, educators, and community leaders need to work together in order to ensure that character education is being taught to every child.

It is commonly believed that the church, community, and home offer less guidance today than in the past (Anderson & Prawat, 1983). One area needing guidance is respect and responsibility. Respect and responsibility need to be patterned, modeled, discussed, and internalized (Chamberlin & Chambers, 1994).

Research indicates that a student's social acceptance and behavior can be partially explained by knowing the student's social goals (Wentzel, 1994). Stiehl developed three areas of responsibility; personal, social, and environmental. Students have to make personal choices, deal with others socially, and the classroom should provide a positive environment to model responsibility and respect (Stiehl, 1993).

The literature reflects that children need to know they have some control over their own destiny and that the choices they make will effect their future. Social and personal responsibility are vital to success and must be encouraged. As a result, society as a whole will most assuredly benefit (Stiehl, 1993).

In the area of classroom management, teachers are faced with either the real or perceived inability to influence behavior. Many factors combine to make it difficult for teachers to maintain discipline in the classroom. According to Canter & Canter (as cited in Conte, 1994) these factors include: teachers inadequately trained to deal with today's behavior problems, a lower level of respect from parents and students, the idea that a "good" teacher doesn't ask for help, the content of the curriculum alone is not enough to motivate students, and more students come to school with behavior problems now than ever before. In addition, the implementation of inclusion has enabled an increasing number of students with special needs to be integrated into the regular classroom environment, which results in behavior problems (Conte, 1994).

Many theories on classroom behavior management exist today. Skinner's behavior modification theory states that by rewarding appropriate behavior and ignoring or punishing inappropriateness, students learn the acceptable behaviors and repeat them, resulting in better classroom behavior. Glasser's philosophy revolves around the idea that every behavior involves a choice, either good or bad. Teachers instruct students in making value judgments about their behavior and in the importance of making "good" choices. Ginott theorized that teachers who communicated cooperation, acceptance of the feelings of others, and avoided labels, presented a model of behavior that students could emulate. Dreikurs believed that students should be given the opportunity to create rules and consequences that constitute the classroom discipline plan. By taking ownership, students learn the importance of making decisions and the value of acceptable behaviors. Kounin's management theory suggests that teachers who are aware of what is going on in the classroom at all times and are able to deal with more than one problem at a time, are better classroom managers (Conte, 1994).

One management program that incorporates these theories is Discipline With Dignity, which offers strategies and teaches skills for dealing with anger and disruptive behaviors. The authors of the program believe that dealing with student behaviors is the responsibility of the teacher, that it's important to treat students with dignity, and on an individual basis, and that taking responsibility for one's behavior exceeds the importance of compliance. The program further suggests that consequences be firm, clear and consistent, and should never be embarrassing for the students. (Conte, 1994)

Another management program, Teaching Children To Love Themselves, emphasizes techniques to improve students' self-esteem. By improving their self-concepts and raising personal expectations, students will increase the behaviors that make them feel better about themselves. (Conte, 1994)

Assertive Discipline is a classroom management program developed around four basic concepts: 1.) behavior is a choice, 2) all students have the right to learn in a disruption-free

environment, 3) teachers have the right to teach in a disruption free environment, 4) no child should be allowed to act in a way that is not in his/her best interest. (Conte, 1994)

The use of a Student Peer Mediation program such as the one incorporated in Conflict Resolution, develops communication and problem-solving skills among students. Mediators guide two or more of their peers, who are engaged in a disagreement, through active listening, questioning, and problem-solving techniques, thereby, finding unique solutions to their dispute (Conte, 1994).

It is important that students be instructed in an environment that is both intellectually and emotionally conducive to learning. Both students and teachers deserve the right to function in an environment free from disruptions caused by inappropriate behavior. Hechinger (as cited in Conte, 1994, p.313) states that, "With effective implementation of classroom management strategies, both students and teachers can maximize their full potential and benefit from the educational process."

A thorough review of the literature indicates that each of these solution strategies could decrease the number of inappropriate behaviors in the classroom. While instruction in social and life skills, character education, student respect and responsibility education have all proven to be viable solutions, cooperative learning programs encompass many of the positive aspects of each of these programs, while allowing for the coverage of content areas. According to Johnson and Johnson, Leming and Hollifield, and Slavin (as cited in Tyrrell, 1990) pro-social attitudes and behaviors, classroom climate, internal locus of control, acceptance of mainstreamed students, and the liking of school and learning, can all be positively effected by the implementation of cooperative learning in the classroom. Many teachers find they have fewer behavior problems and students are more cooperative, are concerned with classmates feelings, listen better, and show greater tolerance for the weaknesses of others (Tyrrell,1990).

The action plan will indicate that a conflict resolution program will be implemented in school site A, where a high incidence of aggressive, inappropriate behaviors exist. Bodine, Crawford, and Schrumpf (1994) stated that:

> The ability to express and resolve conflict is central to the peaceful expression of human rights. The skills and strategies of conflict resolution are also the skills of peace. Conflict resolution and peace-making can be viewed as responsibilities inherent in citizenship in democratic society. When children peacefully express their concerns and seek resolutions to problems that take into account common interests, they not only promote the values of human dignity and self-esteem, but also advance democracy. (p.3)

A community project will be implemented along with these programs at both to encourage transfer of the social skills developed in the programs.

Project Objectives And Processes

Based on the literature reviewed and as a result of training in cooperative learning skills during the period of September 1996 to January 1997, the targeted students will decrease the number of inappropriate behavior incidents as measured by the number of office discipline referrals, teacher observational checklists, and review of teacher journals.

In order to accomplish the terminal objective, the following processes are necessary:

1. Materials and activities that develop cooperative and positive interpersonal relationship skills.
2. Create a community school service project that will incorporate cooperative skills.
3. Materials and activities that develop the skills necessary to resolve conflict. Site-A

Action Plan

In order to achieve the stated project objectives, students will engage in activities that will develop cooperative skills and positive interpersonal relationship skills. Students will be assigned to selected groups of 3-5 students. The groups will be culturally diverse, of mixed ability, and instructed by classroom teachers. Interpersonal skills that will be addressed include establishing eye contact, sharing materials, and using appropriate manners. Cooperative skills include communication and cooperative team skills. Communication skills that will be targeted are listening attentively and making appropriate responses. Understanding roles of the different

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team members and the expectations for getting along are skills to be focused on within cooperative teams.

Formal instruction of cooperative and positive relationship skills will be scheduled from one to three times per week. These skills may be addressed through individual, small group, or whole class instruction. Reinforcement of new and previously learned skills will be an on-going daily process.

Several teaching techniques will be used to both introduce and reinforce skills throughout the project. Introduction activities that will help assess prior knowledge include: KWL charts (see appendix E with lesson) and T-charts (see appendix F with lesson). Teacher modeling of appropriate behavior and role playing activities will also be used. Reinforcement activities include: cause and effect charts (see appendix G), PMI charts (see appendix H), webs (see appendix I), agree/disagree charts (see appendix J), and problem solving activities.

Teaching strategies that will be used include group and team projects. Group presentations will be utilized in order to encourage team building and reinforce concepts. Higher level thinking skills will also be enhanced through the use of think-pair-share activities.

Goal setting, control signals, and positive/negative consequences are all operational techniques to be used during the project to accomplish objectives. Goal setting may consist of individual or classroom goals that will be accomplished within a set amount of time. Control signals, such as hand raising, giving the peace sign, blowing a whistle, or turning off the lights will be used to quiet the class. Positive/negative consequences, such as time-out or detentions, as well as free talk or activity time will be used daily in order to maintain a productive learning environment.

Throughout the action research implementation period, a variety of community and school service projects will be performed. Groups for these projects will range from 2-5 students, will be student teacher selected, of mixed ability, culturally diverse, and instructed by classroom teachers. Projects may include: recycling, grounds keeping, landscaping, and canned food drives.

Through civic responsibility, self-esteem, as well as a sense of pride and accomplishment will be instilled. Students will be expected to behave appropriately and show concern for safety when handling materials and equipment. The safety of pedestrians during outdoor activities will also be addressed.

Students in the research group will be instructed in the conflict resolution program 4-5 periods per week with continuous reinforcement of skills being taught. Teaching techniques will include role play (see appendix L1-L4), modeling, and student produced collages (see appendix M). Team projects, think-pair-share, and group presentations are teaching strategies that will be implemented.

Methods of Assessment

Cooperative and positive interpersonal relationship skills will be assessed through the use of observational checklists (see appendix B), teacher journals, office referrals (see appendix K), and student surveys (see appendix A). Observational checklists will be used the first and last two weeks of the project in order to assess behavior. Teacher journals will be used to document weekly activities, student behaviors, and teacher reflections. Student surveys will be used to assess student perceptions of classroom behavior. Records of office referrals will be used to monitor the number of incidences involving severe inappropriate behavior that cannot be addressed in the classroom. Conflict resolution skills will be assessed through a variety of methods. Teachers will use observational checklists, teacher journals, and office discipline referrals. Students will assess themselves through the use of journals and surveys.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this project was to improve discipline in the classroom setting. The implementation of cooperative learning activities, a conflict resolution program, and community projects were chosen to promote the desired behaviors.

Cooperative learning was used to develop cooperative skills and positive interpersonal relationship skills. The students were assigned to selected groups of three to five students. The groups were culturally diverse, of mixed ability, and instructed by classroom teachers. Formal instruction of cooperative and positive relationship skills were scheduled from one to three times per week. These skills included sharing, using good manners, encouraging others, and taking responsibility and were addressed through individual, small group, and whole class instruction. Teaching techniques included: KWL charts, T-charts, cause and effect charts, PMI charts, webs, agree disagree charts, and problem-solving activities. Examples of these teaching techniques can be found in Appendices C-M. Group presentations were also utilized in order to encourage team building and reinforce concepts. Time-out or detentions, as well as free talk and activity time were positive negative consequences used to maintain a productive learning environment.

A variety of community and school service projects were performed during the action research implementation period. At site A, a recycling project involving collecting aluminum cans, crushing them, and turning them in for money to be donated to the school was done approximately every other week. A grounds keeping project implemented at site A, involved

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students in cooperative groups collecting garbage from the school grounds. This activity was completed one time per month. A landscaping project at site A involved students in cooperative groups planting bulbs around the school sign. Students were required to plan the landscaping, prepare the ground, and plant the bulbs, as well as maintaining the flower garden during the spring. A canned food drive was also conducted at site A; students brought in food to be made into baskets for those in need. Projects at site B included a grounds keeping project that involved physical education students in cooperative groups going on walks around the community and picking up garbage along the way. Another project at site B was a canned food drive during which physical education students brought in canned foods to be donated to the local food pantry. The cooperative groups involved in both sites were groups of 2-5 students, which were student teacher selected, of mixed ability, culturally diverse, and instructed by the classroom teacher.

Students at site A were instructed in a conflict resolution program 4-5 times per week. The skills stressed were tolerance, cooperation, acceptance, and taking responsibility for one's behavior. Teaching techniques included role-play, modeling, and student produced collages. Examples of these can be found in Appendices J and K. Class meetings were also conducted 2 or 3 times per week. During this time students could report and resolve conflicts with other students.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to assess the effects of cooperative learning and conflict resolution training (site A) on student interpersonal behavior, a postintervention behavioral checklist was completed. The two weeks of data were tallied and the results of site A are presented in Table 5 along with the combined results of the preintervention data.

Table 5

Pre and Postintervention Researcher Observed Inappropriate Behaviors at Site A

Inappropriate Behaviors	Preintervention		Postintervention	
	Number of Behaviors	Number of Students	Number of Behaviors	Number of Students
Talk Out	471	68	131	40
Put Downs	15	13	11	7
Missing Supplies	18	15	20	11
Physical Contacts	0	0	1	1
Off Task	187	48	65	35
Non Part	10	7	39	21
Out of Seat	34	23	32	13
Other	4	3	5	4

As the data in Table 5 indicate, there was a marked decrease in the number of talk outs and students observed being off task. The number of talk outs decreased by 72% and the students observed being off task decreased by 65%. The number of students committing these behaviors also dropped 41% and 27% respectfully. While there was a 10% increase in the category of "missing supplies," the number of students responsible for this behavior decreased by 27%. There was a significant increase in the category "non participation" which rose by almost a factor of 3. The number of students in this category more than doubled during the postintervention observation period. The behavior checklist does not reflect any particular subject responsible for the increase nor does the researcher's journal note any significant reason for such a rise. This information is illustrated in figure 4.

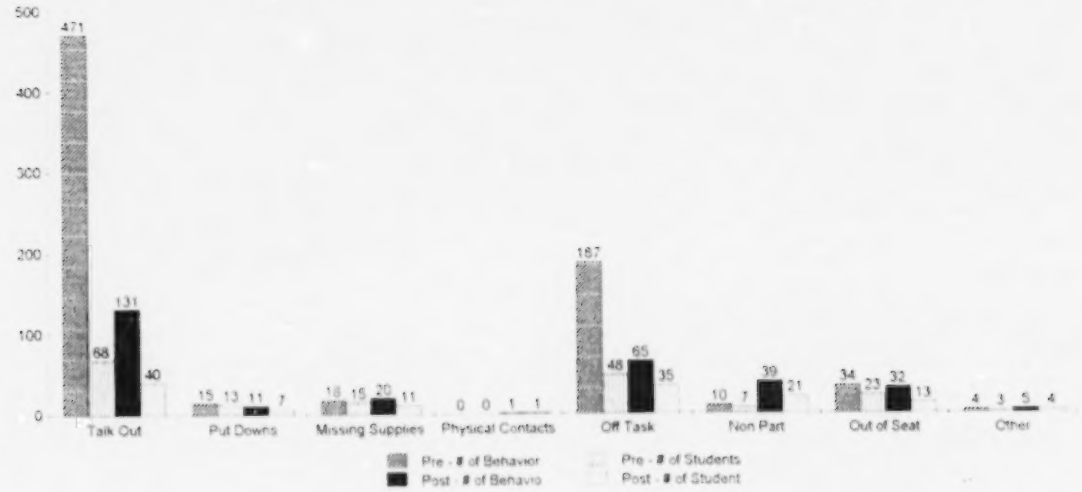

Figure 4. Categories of observed inappropriate behaviors and a comparison of pre and postintervention frequency of incidents at site A.

Table 6 indicates the pre and postintervention frequency of inappropriate behaviors observed at site B. The data shows a decrease in all categories except for "talk outs" which remained at 16. Significant decreases were noted in the categories of "put downs" which diminished by 73% and students off task which dropped 64%. Other categories that showed a decrease of 50% or more include; "missing supplies," "nonparticipation," and "other." The number of students committing the behaviors also decreased in every category with the most significant being "missing supplies," at 54%. Another area that showed considerable improvement was the number of inappropriate physical contacts which went from three during the preintervention period to zero during the postintervention period. This information is illustrated in figure 5.

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Table 6

Pre and Postintervention Researcher Observed Inappropriate Behaviors at Site B

Inappropriate Behaviors	Preintervention		Postintervention	
	Number of Behaviors	Number of Students	Number of Behaviors	Number of Students
Talk Out	16	11	16	8
Put Downs	22	8	6	5
Missing Supplies	16	13	8	6
Physical Contacts	3	2	0	0
Off Task	14	7	5	4
Non Part	19	9	8	7
Out of Seat	6	6	4	4
Other	3	2	1	1

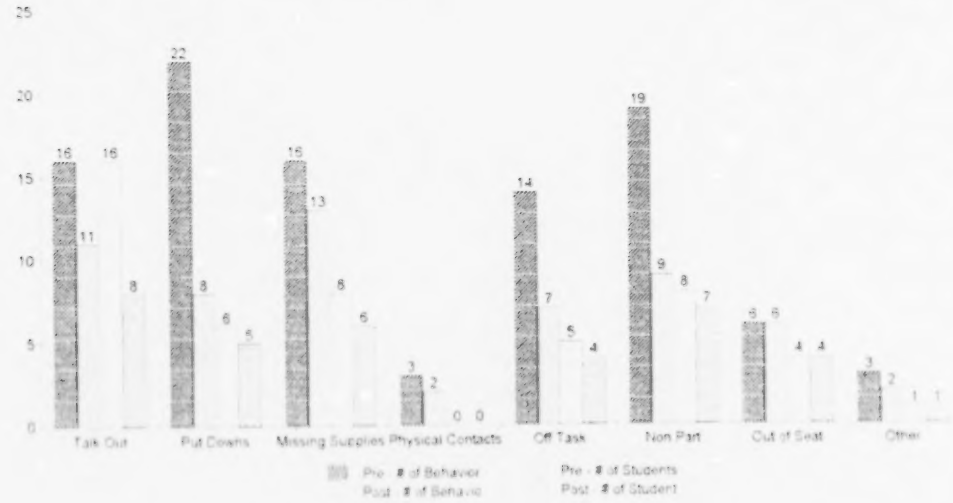

Figure 5. Categories of observed inappropriate behaviors and a comparison of pre and postintervention frequency of incidents at site B

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Conclusions and Recommendations

A review and analysis of the behavior checklist indicate that students at site A demonstrated a marked improvement in interpersonal behaviors. The conflict resolution program, along with cooperative learning activities and community projects, appear to have had a positive affect on students' behavior. The teacher's journal reflects that students utilized the mediation process in order to resolve conflicts, which in turn, resulted in fewer office referrals, an increase in students' time-on-task, as well as, compliance with classroom procedures. The cooperative learning activities may have attributed to an increase in nonparticipation, due to the fact that group settings enabled teams to complete projects without all students contributing.

Based on the presentation and analysis of the behavior checklist, students at site B also demonstrated a dramatic improvement in interpersonal behaviors. It appears that, as a result of cooperative learning activities and community projects, students showed gains in social skills which resulted in fewer discipline problems in the classroom. The fact that the number of put downs and physical contacts decreased, demonstrates gains made during the intervention period. Other areas of improvement attributed to the cooperative learning tasks are; more students prepared for class, on task, and participating in classroom activities.

The analysis of both researchers conclude that as a result of cooperative learning activities, conflict resolution training, and community projects, students demonstrated improved interpersonal skills. It is believed by the researchers that the gains exhibited by the students resulted in less discipline problems in the classroom, thereby creating a more educationally productive environment.

It is recommended by both researchers that data be collected weekly during the implementation period. This would allow behavioral changes to be tracked week by week as opposed to only at the beginning and the end. As a result of the weekly data, problems throughout the intervention period can be easily identified and narrowed to a specific week.

If possible, it would be ideal to have someone other than the classroom teacher collect the data. In order to be consistent, the same person should collect all data throughout the

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research project. This would enable the teacher to continue instruction without interruption and ensure accurate data.

It is also recommended that during the planning of the intervention, interruptions such as the Iowa Basic Skills and IGAP testing be considered. The length of these tests, as well as other events (field trips and school functions) tend to slow the momentum and interrupt any progress that may have occurred.

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Appendices

Code # _____

Student Survey

Which of the following behaviors have you observed in our classroom?

___ Talking out

___ Students "putting down" each other

___ Students not following directions

___ Students talking back or being disrespectful teachers

___ Students not paying attention in class

___ Students out of seat without permission

___ Students not prepared for class-books, homework, supplies

___ Students not participating in class activities

___ Inappropriate physical contact-hitting, kicking, pushing, pinching etc...

___ Other inappropriate behaviors-_____

_____

Of these behaviors, which 3 do you feel interfere in your learning the most.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Which of these behaviors have you done in class?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix F
Observation Checklist

BEHAVIOR CHECKLIST _____ Period Date _____

Student Name (coded)	Talking Out	Put Downs	Missing Supplies	Inapprop Physical Contact	Off Task	Non-participate	Out of Seat	Other

Appendix C1
Pre/Post Intervention Data

BEHAVIOR CHECKLIST _____ Period Date _____

Student Name (coded)	Talking Out	Put Downs	Missing Supplies	Inapprop Physical Contact	Off Task	Non-participate	Out of Seat	Other
0-3385	12/1		/2		6/2			
023...20	13/11		1/		4/1	/1	1/	
020327	28/11	1/	1/	/1	6/6	/6	1/1	
023925	5/8				1/5			
027283	12/3				8/7			
0297-2	19/3	1/	1/		1/			
0243	17/3	1/			3/2			
018157	10/	1/			4/2	/4		
0...20	16/				12/			
	9/3				1/			
	4/2				5/1	1/3		
029513	8/5				4/4		1/1	
026577	3/5	/2	/-		2/1		1/	/1
027525	12/4		/2		13/4		2/4	
024...7	18/8		2/3		2/1	/1		
027773	24/9	1/			6/3	/1	/1	
0...48...	28/2	1/	1/		2/	1/	3/11	
0...2...	19/5				2/1		/2	
0...3	14/2		/1		1/			
0...	13/		3/		13/	1/		
0...	12/						1/	
-	3/				1/			
	1/		/-					
TOTALS								

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BEHAVIOR CHECKLIST _____ Period Date _____

Student Name (coded)	Talking Out	Put Downs	Missing Supplies	Inapprop Physical Contact	Off Task	Non-participate	Out of Seat	Other
[illegible]	1							
[illegible]	5				4	3		
254538	3							
251548	9	1	2		1			
274841	20		1 / 5		6 / 2			
203916	28 / 10	1			11 / 5	2		
27452	9 / 10				10			
[illegible]	17	1			3			
[illegible]	10				1 / 2	2	1	
[illegible]	21 / 5		3		25 / 1	3	7	2
[illegible]	17 / 9		1		7 / 2	1 / 1	2	
[illegible]	11 / 3		2		2 / 2		2	
[illegible]	9				17	3	5	
[illegible]	2	1			1	4		1
[illegible]								
[illegible]	4		1		2	1		
[illegible]					2		1	
[illegible]					3	2		
[illegible]						1		
[illegible]							1	
[illegible]	2	2			1	7		
TOTALS								

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PRE = Top #
POST = Bottom #

BEHAVIOR CHECKLIST ____ Period Date 5-3

Student Name (coded)	Talking Out	Put Downs	Missing Supplies	Inapprop Physical Contact	Off Task	Non-participate	Out of Seat	Other
BL	1/4	4/0						
RR	3/7	0/2	3/2		3/3		0/02	
TSI	5/3		5/0					
MB			7/1				0/1	
SH		5/1			3/	0/1		
SP		4/0	0/1		3/1	2/1		0/1
TS								
BS	3/0	0/1	1/4		0/1	0/1		
AM	0/1	7/2			1/	0/2		
TH	3/0					3/0	2/0	
AMI		2/0						
SW	0/1					4/1	3/0	
LR					4/0		1/0	3/0
TOTALS								

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KWL

Thinking Skill: Predicting/Evaluating

What We **Know**	What We **Want** to Find Out	What We **Learned**

T-CHART

Thinking Skill: Visualizing

Looks Like	Sounds Like

? Mrs. Potter's Questions ?

Name _____

Room # _____

What were you trying to do?

What went well?

What would you do differently next time?

What do you need help on?

Appendix G
Cause and Effect

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Name _____

Room # _____

EARTH RESEARCH REPORT P.M.I.

P

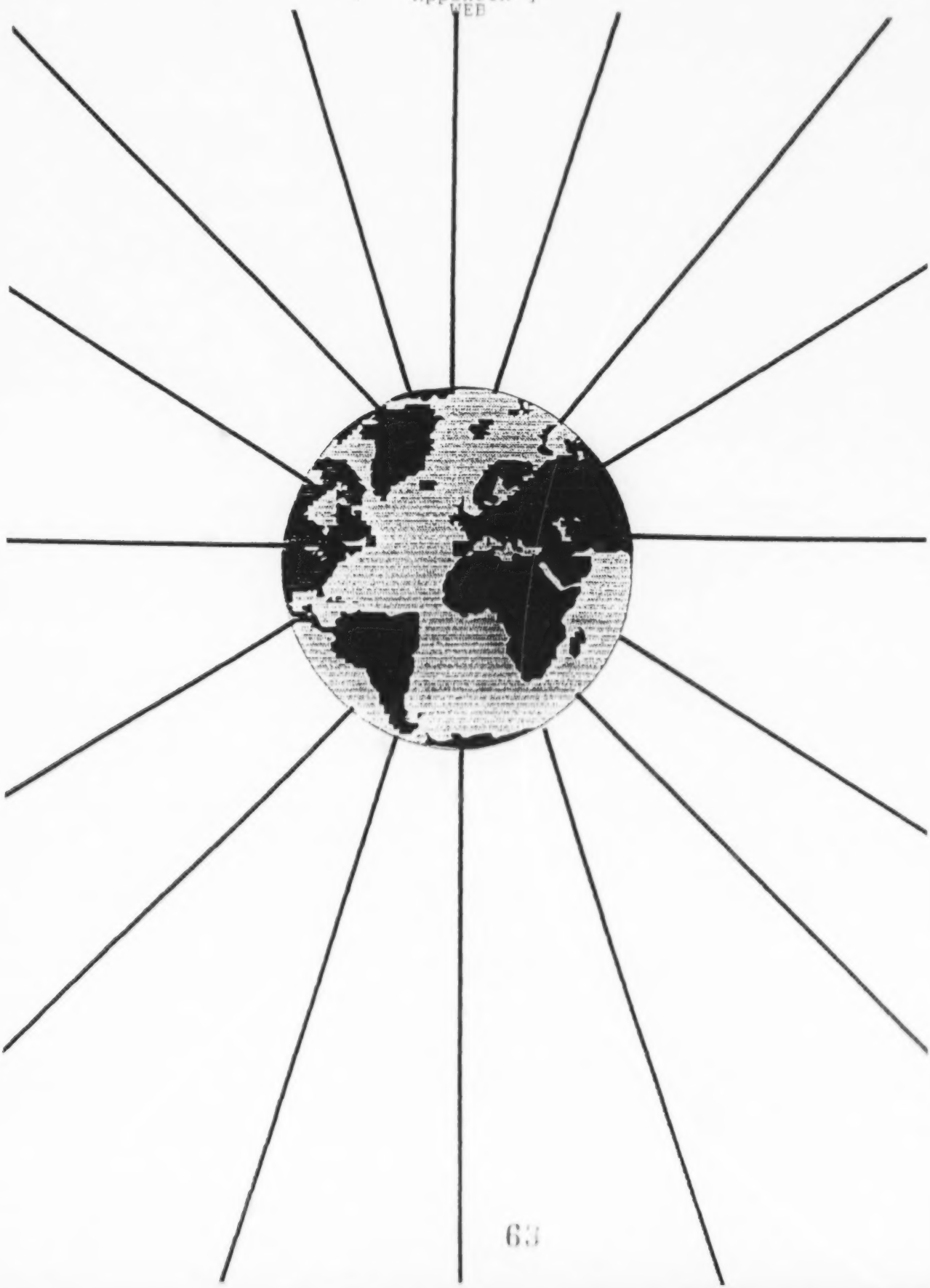
PLUS

M

MINUS

I

INTERESTING



Our environment is at risk.

Agree	Disagree

STUDENT REFERRAL

Student's Name _____ Date _____

Referred by: _____ _____ / _____
Hour / Subject

When / Where incident occurred: _____ Class _____ S. H. _____ Other

_____

Action taken prior to referral:
_____ Called Parent
_____ Consulted Dean
_____ Consulted Counselor
_____ Student Conference
_____ Detained Student after school

Other _____

REASON FOR REFERRAL (Be specific please) _____

_____

_____

_____

Immediate Action taken _____

_____ Student informed of referral _____
(Student's Signature)

_____ Student NOT informed of referral (Explain) _____

RECOMMENDATIONS
_____ As per Handbook
_____ Needs Counseling
_____ Dean's Disposition
_____ Parent Conference

Other _____

****

Dean's Disposition

_____ Student conference
_____ Parent contacted
_____ Referral to _____
_____ Teacher conference
_____ Conference arranged (counselor, parent, teacher)
_____ Detentions/number _____
_____ Unexcused (period/day) _____
_____ Suspension/days _____
_____ Probation
_____ Withdrawn
_____ Other _____

_____

_____

_____

STUDENT COMMENT DETENTION DATES

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ACTIVITY

9 Getting to Win-Win

PURPOSE To learn that soft, hard, and principled responses to conflict achieve losing or winning outcomes

MATERIALS Student Manuals
A few inflated balloons

FORMAT OPTION Whole class discussion/participation

PROCEDURE

1. Refer the group to page 30 in their Student Manuals, "Outcomes of Conflict." Explain that conflicts result in winning or losing outcomes depending on the responses we choose:

   Lose-Lose is when neither person gets what he or she wants. Neither person gets his or her needs met. Both people lose.

   Win-Lose is when one person gets what he or she wants and the other person does not. Only one person gets his or her needs met. One person wins, and the other person loses.

   Win-Win is when the people in the conflict invent options that help both people get their needs met. They both win.

2. Ask for two student volunteers to act out the five scenes on pages 31–32 of the Student Manual. As the volunteers finish each scene, ask the group the questions pertaining to it. If necessary, refer students to the form on page 29 of their Student Manuals ("Responses to Conflict") to help them determine their answers.

   Scene 1 (Win-Lose)

   Did Eric have a soft, hard, or principled response to the conflict? (Soft: Giving in.)

   What about Tanya's response? (Soft: Ignoring.)

   What was the outcome of their responses? (Win-Lose: Tanya got her needs met, but Eric did not.)

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Scene 2 (Lose-Lose)

Did Tanya have a soft, hard, or principled response to the conflict? (Soft: Giving in.)

What about Eric's response? (Soft: Giving in—because he didn't follow after Tanya to try to play with her.)

What was the outcome of their responses? (Lose-Lose: Neither person got his or her needs met. Eric wanted to play with Tanya, and Tanya wanted to play with the balloon by herself.)

Scene 3 (Win-Lose)

Did Eric have a soft, hard, or principled response to the conflict? (Hard: Yelling and threatening.)

What about Tanya's response? (Hard: Pushing and yelling.)

What was the outcome of their responses? (Win-Lose: Tanya got her needs met, but Eric did not.)

Scene 4 (Lose-Lose)

Was Tanya's response soft, hard, or principled? (Hard: Pushing and grabbing.)

What about Eric's response? (Hard: Pushing and grabbing.)

What was the outcome of their responses? (Lose-Lose: No one got his or her needs met.)

Scene 5 (Win-Win)

Was Tanya's response to the conflict soft, hard, or principled? (Principled: Listening, understanding, respecting, resolving.)

What about Eric's response? (Principled: Listening, understanding, respecting, resolving.)

What was the outcome of their responses? (Win-Win: Both got their needs met.)

3. Summarize the possible outcomes of the three types of responses:

   Soft: Lose-Lose or Win-Lose

   Hard: Lose-Lose or Win-Lose

   Principled: Win-Win

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4. Have students fill in these outcomes on the page entitled "Summary: Responses and Outcomes," on page 33 of their Student Manuals.

Five Scenes

SCENE 1

Tanya: *(Tosses balloon in the air, having fun by herself.)*

Eric: I want to play with you. *(Tries to join Tanya by tapping balloon up in the air.)*

Tanya: *(Calmly)* I had it first. *(Ignores Eric and continues to hit the balloon.)*

Eric: *(Watches Tanya, looks sad, and walks away.)*

SCENE 2

Tanya: *(Tosses balloon in the air, having fun by herself.)*

Eric: I want to play with you. *(Tries to join Tanya by tapping balloon up in the air.)*

Tanya: *(Calmly)* I had it first.

Eric: *(Calmly)* You always have everything first.

Tanya: *(Hands the balloon to Eric and walks away.)*

SCENE 3

Tanya: *(Tosses balloon in the air, having fun by herself.)*

Eric: I want to play with you. *(Tries to join Tanya by tapping balloon up in the air.)*

Tanya: *(Angrily)* No, I had it first, and it's mine.

Eric: *(Angrily)* You always have everything first. I'm not going to play with you anymore if you don't let me play right now.

Tanya: *(Pushes Eric away and yells.)* Go away! I don't want to play with you!

Eric: *(Hits the balloon hard and angrily stomps away.)*

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SCENE 4

Tanya: *(Tosses balloon in the air, having fun by herself.)*

Eric: I want to play with you. *(Tries to join Tanya by tapping balloon up in the air.)*

Tanya: *(Angrily)* No, I had it first, and it's mine.

Eric: *(Angrily)* You always have everything first. I'm not going to play with you anymore if you don't let me play right now.

Tanya: *(Pushes Eric away and yells.)* Go away! I don't want to play with you!

Eric: *(Pushes Tanya back.)*

Tanya and Eric: *(Both grab the balloon, which pops.)*

SCENE 5

Tanya: *(Tosses balloon in the air, having fun by herself.)*

Eric: I want to play with you. *(Tries to join Tanya by tapping balloon up in the air.)*

Tanya: I want to play with the balloon by myself.

Eric: Why do you want to play with the balloon by yourself?

Tanya: I'm practicing. This is the first step to learning how to juggle.

Eric: I still want to play with you.

Tanya: I want to play with you, too. I only need to practice a few more minutes. Will you watch and tell me how I'm doing?

Eric: OK. *(Watches Tanya.)* You're good. Will you teach me how to juggle?

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ACTIVITY

2 Peace Collage

PURPOSE To explore the concept of peace in more detail

MATERIALS
Student Manual
A story on the theme of peace
Magazines
Newspapers
Scissors
Glue
Butcher paper

FORMAT OPTIONS
Whole class discussion/participation
Learning center
Cooperative learning

PROCEDURE

1. Read a story where peace is the theme. Discuss peace and how it was made in the story. Some good ones to try are "The Tree House," by Lois Lowry, and "The Birds' Peace," by Jean Craighead, from *Big Book for Peace*, edited by Ann Durrell and Marilyn Sacks (Dutton, 1990). Other books for children are listed in Appendix B.
2. Give students magazines and newspapers and encourage them to cut out headlines and pictures representing peace. Have students glue their cutouts to the butcher paper to create peace collages.
3. Share and discuss the collages.
4. Read or have a volunteer read "A Blessing for Peace" from page 43 of the Student Manual. Give learners the opportunity to write their own poem or blessing about peace in the circle provided.

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